



12 sections, like 12 bars in the blues. Red the voice, the blue is the voice melody on the trumpet.

## Paul Brody, *I am NOT Sitting in A Room* – Munich premiere

The inspiration for *I'm Not Sitting in a Room* came from ALVIN LUCIER's 1970 milestone sound installation *I Am Sitting in a Room*, in which ALVIN LUCIER records a text, then repeatedly replays the text through the natural acoustics of the room. Each episode both alters the sound of his recording.

In fall 2019 conceptual artist MICHAEL GROSSMANN first asked PAUL BRODY to perform ALVIN LUCIER's text for *Fire A 1000 Poems* Theater HochX in Munich. But as the corona virus spread and distance replaced proximity, being in a room was not possible. MICHAEL GROSSMANN instead proposed a collaboration based not on performance, but on a video-sound installation.

For his text, PAUL BRODY recorded a story that often loops in his head while he walks his neighborhood rounds. Like in ALVIN LUCIER's work, the text repeats. But PAUL BRODY records his own voice-melody on the trumpet and creates a dialogue between the spoken word and melodic narrative. Throughout the composition, the voice and its melody wrestle—sometimes the melody overcomes the voice, at other times the words dominate and the trumpet whispers its accompaniment.

Along with reflecting on ALVIN LUCIER's sound installation, *I am Not Sitting in a Room* references an early innovation of recording and performance. In December 1938, a few months after the death of ROBERT JOHNSON, producer JOHN HAMMOND decided to end his *Spirituals to Swing* concert at Carnegie Hall by wheeling a phonograph onstage and playing a ROBERT JOHNSON recording, stunning the audience into rousing applause. This is a perfect story to loop!!!

*I'm not sitting in a room. I'm out taking the usual walk from my apartment, past the corner supermarket, then down the street and through the park to the edge of the football field and back.*

*While walking I often have the same reoccurring daydream: There's a room with nothing in it but a piece of paper littering the floor. I pick up the paper and read about an almost forgotten historic event: In 1938, record producer, John Hammond, was putting on a concert at Carnegie Hall. It was called From Spirituals to Swing, and lots of musicians were invited to play. Blues legend, Robert Johnson, was to appear as a special guest. But three days before the concert, a jealous fan had given Robert Johnson some whisky with rat poison in it. When John Hammond heard the news he substituted Robert Johnson's absence with a record player placed on center stage at Carnegie Hall.*

*At the end of my daydream I ponder: this must have been the first time a record player was used on its own as a performance piece. I promise myself that when I get back to the apartment, I'll research this, but I always forget. One of the songs that was played was: Walking Blues.*